

Annex "A," Subparagraph la,
Sociological Background

GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY

[162] Although the number of Livonians is very
565 small (in 1920 ca. 1500-2000, in 1949 ca. 1000),
578 they are divided into several groups both on
the basis of their economic situation and their
attitude toward Livonian nationalism. Econ-
omically the Livonians form three district
classes: a) the farmers, the merchants and
the speculators; b) the small farmers; and c)
the tenants. A certain antagonism exists be-
tween these classes, as evidenced in the fact
that the so-called "bourgeois" have not been
admitted into the co-operatives. These classes
had, before the occupation by the Soviet Union
in 1940, different political ideals also: the
richer people were for the rightist conservative
parties, while the poorer elements gave their
support to the Social Democrats.

186 The Livonians are not unified either in
their attitude toward Livonian nationalism. Two
basic groups can be distinguished among them:
the nationally conscious ones who strive for the
preservation of Livonianism, and those who
prefer to succumb to Latvianization. Between
these two extremes are, of course, several
transitional groupings with various degrees of
interest in the problem.

The strong national awakening which took

186 place in Livonia under the instigation of Estonian and Finnish academic circles in the 1920's and which gave the Livonians their national flag and anthem and their national cultural society, had a strong unifying influence on the Livonians. Many of the people who up to that time had had little interest in the cause of Livonianism were seized with a patriotic fever and started teaching Livonian to their children and began again to speak their old language in their homes. The struggle for the fulfillment of their national program--the formation of their own county, establishment of their own schools and libraries--compelled them to forget the existing differences and to form a unified Livonian nation. The first national festivals, for instance the so-called flag festival in 1923, demonstrated a strong national enthusiasm. But the ensuing oppression of their national movement on the part of the Latvian government soon calmed them down and forced them to take a more realistic attitude toward their national problem. Several less idealistically-spirited Livonians abandoned little by little their national ideals and returned again to the use of the Latvian language.

182 Livonianism is rather strong in villages
186 such as Iira, Koshtrõg, and Kuolka, where the majority of the Livonians speak the mother
182 tongue. However, wherever the Livonians form
177 a minority, they show a considerable tendency
578 for assimilation with the Latvians. An example
● of this is Mustnumm, an almost completely

182 Latvianized Livonian village. In 1930, Loorits found
177 there about ten Livonians, all of whom felt
578 ashamed of their Livonian origin, looked down
● upon the Livonian language and were even
proud that they had forgotten so much of their
mother tongue. An arrogant woman ironically
demanded from Loorits one Lat for every
Livonian word she would say, another jeered
even more disdainfully: "What will one get for
this language? Land or a house? Geese or
only a hen?" And pointing to her house which
was being built she continued: "Does this
horse language [i. e., Livonian] give the roof
on our house or soft sofas in the rooms?" The
woman's son swore in Latvian that he would
never learn a word of the horse language, that
he was not a Livonian but a thoroughbred
Latvian and that he would drive the foolish
Livonian patriots from the shore into the sea.
(Oskar Loortis, "Liivi usundi mandumisprot-
sess," Virittäjä, 1945, pp. 436-37.)

181 Livonians are basically individualists,
226 but their collectivist bent has strongly devel-
476 oped during the centuries due to their main
profession, fishing. Almost all fishing is done
collectively, in groups of two to six or more
men, since big fishing gear cannot be handled
by one person. The fish caught is distributed
between all the partners. In addition, large
nets and seines are owned collectively.